



LD
2001
G4041P6

LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS

LIBRARY OF CONGRE

Chap. LD2001
The G4041P6

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





and

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHRENAKOSMIAN SOCIETY,

OF

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

Hon. Hugh McCulloch,
with great regard from
W.P.S.

AN

A D D R E S S ,

DELIVERED ON THE 9th OF AUGUST, 1865,

BEFORE THE

PHRENAKOSMIAN SOCIETY

OF

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE,

GETTYSBURG.

By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

OF ALBANY, N. Y.



V

ALBANY :

VAN BENTHUYSEN'S STEAM PRINTING HOUSE.

1865.

LJ 2001 P6
G4041

ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN :

THE circumstances in which we meet are so peculiar that I know you will pardon a brief allusion to them. It is now, I believe, somewhat more than two years and a half since I was honoured, by the Society here assembled, with an invitation to address them at their next succeeding anniversary. That invitation I cheerfully accepted ; and it is due to candour to say that I accepted it, not merely in the hope of being able to say something that might, in some way, subserve the interests of those whom I should address, but because I should thereby be brought, for the first time, into a part of the country in which I have felt a deep interest from my early years, and into a circle in which I should recognize some very dear and honoured friends. But, after I had made the requisite preparation for meeting you, the startling intelligence came to us that Gettysburg was threatened with invasion by a hostile army ;

and I need not say that this was but the harbinger of the yet more startling tidings that a fearful battle was in progress here ;—a battle which, as it has turned out, must always form one of the terrors and one of the glories of History. You were kind enough to renew your invitation to me to address you the following year ; and this again I accepted,—and the more readily, as no change had occurred to render inappropriate what I had designed to say to you the year before. But strange enough, within less than forty-eight hours of the time when I expected to commence my journey hither,—as if the Rebel General were determined to vent his spite against you or me, the news came to me that my services would not be required, as you were scattering to your several homes in the prospect of another hostile attack ; though, thanks to a Gracious Providence, the raid then threatened was not suffered to take effect. Another year has passed ; and your courtesy, which seems to have no limit, has again renewed the invitation, notwithstanding the result of your previous applications had associated me in your minds with nothing but disappointment. I resolved that I would still make another effort to come ; but, on referring to the preparation I had previously made

for meeting you, I found that it contemplated a state of things as remote from what now exists as war is from peace. Instead, however, of complaining of the additional labour which this discovery has imposed upon me, I thank God, with all my heart, for the auspicious change in which the necessity has originated; and let me say I congratulate both you and myself that our long deferred meeting, though it takes place while the remembrances of scenes of carnage and desolation are still fresh and bitter, yet falls into a period when the Nation is at peace, and Treason has either sunk into a dishonoured grave, or is seeking a hiding place among the caves and dens of the earth. Discarding, therefore, what I had intended to say to you in each of the two preceding years, I shall hope to keep within the legitimate range of the present associations of the occasion, in presenting to you a few thoughts on *the Mission of the Educated Mind of our Country, as determined by the present National Crisis.*

In speaking of the present crisis, you will of course understand me as referring to those features of our condition immediately consequent upon the passing off of that cloud which has been discharging upon us its tempest of blood and fire during

the last four years. It is natural that our first thoughts should be of the glory of the change—no more armies girding themselves for deadly conflict—no more gloomy forebodings in respect to the result of impending battles—no more reports of cities laid waste, of garments rolled in blood, of thousands of dwellings rendered desolate in an hour ; but, instead thereof, the voice of gladness and praise is heard all over the land that the bloody strife has ceased, and that we are still an undivided nation,—aye, and a stronger, healthier, better nation, by reason of the terrible discipline that has been administered to us. But if we will fully comprehend our actual condition, we must not stop here ; and a closer inspection will show us that, while the war has, as we have reason to believe, embodied the elements of enduring national glory, it has also, in various ways, wrought a mighty amount of evil that needs to be corrected; has created demands for vigorous and well directed activity which it devolves upon the present generation to meet. And the greater responsibility rests upon men of cultivated minds ; for they have generally a deeper insight than others into human affairs, and a proportionally higher control of human conduct. Every one indeed,—

no matter how uncultivated or obscure,—is bound to do what he can to meet the grand necessities of the day ; to secure to the country the substantial good which a Gracious Providence is proffering to it through the medium of its own calamities ; but, I say again, the leaders in the great work of reform, and purification, and elevation, must be men of thought and culture.

Let me direct your attention, in the first place, to the fact that the educated mind of the country is the constituted guardian of the country's *intellectual* interests. During the long period of national prosperity which preceded the late convulsive struggle, our literary institutions were generally in a healthful state, and were moving forward in their legitimate work, unembarrassed by any untoward influences from without. But, with this fearful interruption of the nation's peace, there has come a corresponding derangement of every thing pertaining to the well-being of society ;—an evil in which our higher institutions of learning have taken a full share. Nearly all the Colleges at the South have, I believe, entirely suspended their operations ; not only from the fact that the regions in which they are situated had become the immediate theatre of bloody warfare, but because their

officers as well as students were put in requisition for military service. And though our Northern Colleges have not suffered equally with the Southern, yet they too have felt the disturbing influence ; and not a few of their students—patriotic and brave young men—have withdrawn temporarily from their studies, for the sake of enlisting in their country's defence. Your own College has had an experience on this subject of perhaps a more strongly marked character than any other. You have been subjected not only to protracted suspense and alarm, but to actual dispersion, from the approach of an invading army ; and some of you, I doubt not, were witnesses to that terrific scene of slaughter that electrified with horror the heart of the whole nation. It were absurd to suppose that, while war, war has been the all-absorbing theme every-where else, its disquieting, agitating influence should not have penetrated our literary institutions ; and, just in proportion as it has found its way into them, it has acted as a check upon their legitimate operations. In addition to this, many young men, who, but for the war, would have been passing through a collegiate course, have volunteered to enter the army, and take their chance among the hardships and perils of

military life. And I must not omit to add that, while our seminaries have been thus interfered with in respect to their internal operations, Philanthropy has been so pressed with claims of more immediate urgency, that she has naturally enough suspended, in a great degree, her former helping ministrations to the cause of learning; though, in making this remark, I am glad to say that Yale College and one or two others have been favoured exceptions.* And the evil of which I speak has not been confined to our educational interests—many scientific researches have been arrested, many plans of public improvement have been postponed, many projected works in the different departments of human knowledge have been kept back, because the Nation's mind has been tasked to its utmost capacity in determining and applying the means of our national preservation.

Now is it not manifest that a vast amount of care and labour is necessary to restore the equili-

*I was not aware, until after this Address was delivered, that Pennsylvania College was among these exceptions. During the past year no less than eighty thousand dollars have been contributed to its funds. Of this sum twenty thousand have been given for founding a Professorship, by the Rev. J. E. GRAEFF; and twenty thousand more for founding another, by the Messrs. OCKERHAUSEN,—examples worthy of all praise.

brium of the Nation's intellect, and to bring again into successful operation the requisite agencies for its development and progress ? First of all, let the young men whose educational advantages and acquisitions have been contracted through the pressure and agitation of the times, resolve that, by greater diligence and more concentrated effort, they will speedily make up for all that they have lost. Let those, who are charged with the instruction and management of our literary institutions, gird themselves, under an increased sense of responsibility, for nobler achievements in the cause of education, endeavouring at once to elevate the general standard, and render more perfect the various details. Let those, whom God has blessed with wealth as well as intelligence, account it at once a privilege and an honour to make large offerings to the cause of general improvement, and especially to elevate the character of our Colleges and increase the facilities of liberal education. Let the intelligent community at large be quickened to a higher sense of the importance of the general diffusion of knowledge ; and let those cultivated minds which have had their particular fields of labour,—now that they have cut loose from a four years' bondage,—be more active than

ever in penetrating into the secrets of nature, or in perfecting themselves in any other departments of knowledge to which they have been devoted. Let many of our young men, who have enjoyed an academic training, direct their attention to the South, as a most promising field for useful activity; and over that ground, which has been so thoroughly harrowed and broken, let them scatter the seeds of knowledge, in preparation for a rich harvest in the next generation. And may I not add, let the requisite provision be made for educating that immense throng of minds, now, in the providence of God, delivered from bondage, so that, wherever their lot shall be cast, they may be prepared to exercise, with intelligence and dignity, the rights of freemen. Let the war be followed by such a state of things as this, and we shall not have to wait long to see the intellectual character of our country not only relieved from the burden that has oppressed it, but assuming grander proportions and a brighter hue from our having been so long in the furnace.

But, while the intellectual interests of the country have been subjected to a terrible ordeal, and have actually suffered not a little, in some respects, in this long continued struggle, let it not

be forgotten that, in other respects, the influences have been propitious; and that, if part of the service to which we are called is to heal or avert, another part is to direct, develope and mature. Though the mind of the nation has been necessarily diverted, in no small degree, from interests purely intellectual, its condition has been any thing else than one of indolent repose—its faculties have been aroused to unaccustomed effort—it has been grappling with questions involving the Nation's life or death—even the most uncultivated and unreflecting have found new thoughts flowing into their minds from sources that have never before been open to them; and all classes, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, have been quickened into a habit of greatly increased mental activity. Now, since the times have changed, our thoughts necessarily take other directions; but what we have to do is to see to it that we do not suffer ourselves to yield to the reaction too often consequent upon effort, and thus lose the benefit of a healthful excitement. Let the invigorating influence, that has been so universally diffused, still be retained among us, and, though operating in new channels, let it operate with undiminished power. Let it circulate freely

through all the pores of society, thus clothing the Nation with a sort of new life, that shall be a certificate to the world of its having undergone an intellectual renovation.

And yet another thought, worthy of being pondered in this connection, is, that, during these years of darkness, there has been accumulating a vast amount of material, that may be, ought to be, turned to good account in aiding our future intellectual progress. It would be difficult to designate a period throughout all history, in which the developments of the common humanity have been more strikingly and strangely significant, or the teachings of Divine Providence more varied and impressive, than that which has just now closed upon us in the return of peace. Let the historian arrange these facts in a faithful and luminous record, which shall form a study for the generations to come. Let the philosopher show us how these same facts illustrate some of the great principles of the Divine Government on the one hand, and the tendencies and capabilities of human nature on the other. And let men of all classes make themselves familiar with the appalling history, not for purposes of mere speculation or curiosity, but that they may thereby enlarge their

field of thought, and acquire a fresh stimulus to mental activity. Thus will the Nation's mind receive an impulse, which we may reasonably regard as the pledge of harmonious and enduring growth.

Passing from the intellectual, let us glance, for a moment, at the *moral* and *religious* interests of the country, as they come under the guardianship of our educated men. Of course I limit myself here to men of high moral principle, men in whose characters the Christian virtues shine forth in their purity and elevation—for a liberal culture, associated with a perverse disposition, only increases the power for evil; while, on the other hand, when found in conjunction with a pure heart, it is proportionally prolific of good. Thanks to Divine Providence that so many of our most cultivated minds, in all the walks of public usefulness, have bowed to the influences of a living Christianity, and are examples, not only of intellectual vigour and efficiency, but of earnest devotion to the cause of truth and goodness. Nor should it be forgotten that one entire profession,—I mean of course the Christian ministry,—who are set apart for the very purpose of making the world better, are, or ought to be, men, whose

minds, if not cast originally in a superior mould, have at least been disciplined by a thorough education. The work of moral and religious reform, of which I here speak, is a work for the whole Church, and every member of the Church, to engage in—and yet even here the cultivated mind is found to take the lead—yes, even grace itself usually achieves its grandest triumphs, when walking hand in hand with the well developed powers of nature.

That the interests of virtue and religion in our country have suffered greatly, during the last four years, must be apparent, whether we contemplate the result as already manifest, or trace the baleful influences by which that result has been accomplished. War, in its very nature, involves crime of the deepest dye. Those, on whom the responsibility of it ultimately rests,—whatever may be the verdict of their fellow men concerning them,—are really chargeable, in the eye of Heaven, with murder, on a scale of appalling magnitude. And while war is in itself a most grievous offence against both God and man, it involves, in its progress, temptations to various forms of moral evil, which none but the most watchful and resolute successfully oppose. Even those who are thor-

oughly imbued with the evangelical spirit, and have openly pledged themselves, by a Christian profession, to live a godly life, are too often over-powered by the adverse influences that beset them ; while those who are not thus fortified, especially those whose tendencies to evil had been previously restrained only through the influence of circumstances, are almost certain to surrender themselves to some one or more of the forms of open vice. All this, as a host of witnesses will testify, has been strikingly illustrated in the war through which we have been passing. Not that this effect has been universal ; for our hearts have, from time to time, been gladdened by the tidings that the clangor of arms and the shouts of victory have been succeeded by the voice of thanksgiving and praise—and still more, that not a few, who were showing themselves valiant in their country's defence, were also enlisting as soldiers of the Cross ; and that this, in some instances, received the marked approbation of the officers in command. These are bright spots in the history that we love to contemplate ; but we cannot doubt, notwithstanding, that a current of evil has been urging its way, in connection with our military operations, through this whole period ; and that the

fearfully haggard and wo-worn appearance of many of our soldiers, released or escaped from Southern prisons, is but a fit emblem of the moral degradation and ruin into which many others have voluntarily plunged.

But it is not merely in the march, the camp, the battle-field, that the spirit of evil has been at work, but in the outside management of things—in the selfish intrigues, the stupendous frauds, the positive thefts, that have been perpetrated, either directly or indirectly, upon the government, or upon the brave men who have been imperilling their lives to save the country. Let the men who have brought this deep stain upon the Nation's honour, never venture again to hold up their heads in the Nation's presence. Let the brand of ignominy, which they bear about with them, remain, ineffaceable, to warn the world against a reproduction of their base and horrible crimes.

I must add that there has been an influence hostile to truth and virtue that has reached much beyond those who have been directly engaged, either as military men or as civilians, in the prosecution of the war. I will not speak here of the plans, worthy to have originated in hell, for laying waste our cities by fire, and opening in each

a fountain of blood ; nor even of the tragical scene that struck horror to the Nation's—I may say to the World's—inmost heart ; but I will point you to demonstrations of a less flagrant character—I will ask you to contemplate the power of party prejudice, in originating the torrents of abuse and crimination that have been directed against men of the sternest integrity and the loftiest patriotism. Witness, too, the distrust of an over-ruling providence that has often been manifested, even by good men ; as if there were no agency on earth or in Heaven by which the country could be saved. And need I add that the war has been so prolific of subjects of thought and conversation, that have proved themselves all-absorbing, that the great concern of religion has been too often practically ignored ; that, while some have found in this state of things an apology for neglecting their immortal interests altogether, others have suffered it to chill their devout affections, and relax their hold of spiritual objects, and thus obscure their evidences of Christian character. In some portions of the Church a different result, I know, has been witnessed ; but that the general fact has been as I have stated, admits, I believe, of no doubt.

Now, while we are to bear in mind that all the virtuous and good may find a legitimate sphere of labour here, I say again, it devolves especially upon the more enlightened of this class to take the lead in the great reformatory work—it is primarily through their vigorous and well-directed efforts that we may expect to see the powers of evil among us neutralized, and a pure and healthful influence become at once intense and all-pervading. This result is to be reached partly by direct action upon individual minds, and partly by purifying the public sentiment, and thus elevating the general standard of morals and religion.

There is no department of society in which are not to be found great numbers of individuals, whose characters bear fearful testimony to the corrupting influence of the war; and each of these is a legitimate subject for the reforming influence of which I speak. Let not the most gifted and cultivated think it beneath them to drop the word of counsel or warning upon the ear of the discharged soldiers, who, in serving their country, have contracted habits that threaten ruin to themselves; for who can tell but that a word thus fitly spoken may be the medium through which the almighty power and grace of God may work to

refashion the inner, as well as to reform the outer, man. Let Christian Benevolence recognize as her appropriate subjects all upon whose characters the war has acted as an influence for evil, and if her mission be wisely performed, it is reasonable to expect that the blessing of God will follow in her footsteps. I would that the sense of personal responsibility in reference to this subject were diffused through all classes of our educated Christian men all over the land; and I am sure the result would be that we should see a process speedily inaugurated by which not a small part of the moral desolation consequent upon the war would be repaired.

But there is another and a more general way in which the intelligent Christian mind of the country is to operate in securing this result—it is by creating a more healthful moral and religious sentiment; by impressing all classes with the dignity of truth and virtue, and holding up error and vice to their merited odium. Only let these opposite qualities hold their proper place in the public thought and feeling, and you have the best provision possible for the triumph of the right, at least in all that pertains to the outward life. Let every agency then be put in requisition that can

be, for securing this grand result. Let not only the pulpit but the platform, the press, and especially the College, each prove itself an efficient helper in enlightening the public mind, in quickening the public conscience, in purifying the public heart. Let all the instrumentalities already existing for achieving a result so honourable and glorious be carefully preserved and kept in vigorous exercise; and let others be added as the united product of wisdom and charity. In a word, let the religious element become far more prominent in our national being—let it be our highest ambition to see a pure, living, almighty Christianity establishing her gracious reign throughout all our borders.

There is another class of interests for which our more cultivated minds must be held chiefly responsible—I mean the *social* and *civil*. If, indeed, the due culture of the intellect and the heart is secured, we have all that is necessary to the well being of the State and of society; for there are no relations upon which the combined influence of intelligence and virtue does not act both benignly and powerfully. Still this is a point of so much moment, especially in its present bearings upon

our own country, as not only to justify but require distinct consideration.

In the struggle just past, our institutions have received a shock so convulsive that the fact of their having triumphantly survived it may well make them fearless of every earthly power. This goodly Union, constituted by the wisdom and energy, and sealed with the blood, of a past generation, has been ruthlessly assailed—those who hated it looked at it as only a thing of the past, while many who reverently and gratefully cherished it, feared that its death-knell would quickly be sounded. The effort thus made to rend asunder what our fathers and the God of our fathers had so fitly joined together, has indeed proved utterly unsuccessful. The Union stands to-day on a ten-fold firmer basis than if the battle of Gettysburg, and a hundred other battles, had not been fought, and we are nominally a Nation at peace. Nevertheless there are wounds in at least a portion of the Nation's heart, still bleeding,—perhaps festering—the hand has let the sword drop, because it must; but the spirit that wielded it is not yet broken. Now, the great problem that urges itself upon the thoughtful and earnest mind, is, How the smothered fires are to be extinguished; how

the virulence of sectional or party hate is to be neutralized; how men who have faced each other, with the weapons of death, upon the battle field, are to meet in the goodly fellowship of devotion to a common country. The Nation must not indeed let go its dignity, or abjure the claims of public justice, even in the cause of conciliation—but every sacrifice short of this should be promptly and cheerfully submitted to; and our brethren should be made to feel that, on returning cordially to their allegiance, they and we resume the friendly relations of other days. I say then, let those who exercise control,—whether in a wider or more limited sphere,—exalt the virtue of magnanimity, not only with their lips but in their lives.

Another point of vital moment to our national weal, and of course to be kept constantly in view by the educated mind, is a practical recognition of the supremacy of law. We are to see to it, first, that the laws are good and equitable; and if any of a different class still linger in our statute books, let the public conscience be pressed with the obligation to cancel them; and let nothing remain that will not stand the test of immutable right. And then, let our National or State Code,

—thus expurgated, if need be,—be universally recognized as a binding authority. Let the man of gray hairs reverence it. Let the man, whose relations in business have grown complicated and difficult, reverence it. Let the man of wayward tendencies and habits be made to tremble before it as a mighty retributive power. Let men in high places, who spurn its restraints, and would fain trample on its provisions, have the alternative placed vividly before them of submitting to its authority or being crushed by its weight. Let the mind, in its first developments, yes, let even childhood itself, be imbued with a reverent regard for law; and let the sentiment be all the time growing stronger as the years pass away. In the establishment, especially in the faithful observance, of righteous laws, justice is enthroned and honoured—surely an object so identified with our social and national well-being ought to secure universal and hearty co-operation.

Another point to which our men of education and influence are bound to give special attention, is the selection of suitable persons to occupy the high places of civil trust and authority. Nothing is more damaging to the interests of a State or a Nation than to have the management of its affairs

entrusted to incompetent or unworthy men. A weak ruler, though he may be honest, cannot be trusted ; for his shortsightedness may, in spite of his good intentions, commit him to a course that will be fraught with peril, or even ruin. A ruler of great shrewdness and intellectual force, but of selfish aims and doubtful patriotism, will inevitably prove an incubus upon his country's prosperity, possibly a curse through many generations. Our only safety is in placing the reins of government in the hands of those who unite both the requisite intellectual and moral qualifications ; who are alike quick to discern danger and firm to meet it ; whose great hearts are always impelling their great intellects in the right direction,—that of national safety and glory. Let the doctrine be everywhere inculcated and enforced that not party spirit, but an honest, earnest love of country,—not a mind contracted and one-sided in its views, but comprehensive, impartial, magnanimous,—should constitute one a candidate for high civil office,—and, in proportion as such views prevail, the men who aspire to office, as well as those who appoint to it, will be fitted to meet their several responsibilities. That good rulers are a blessing, and bad rulers are a curse, is indeed

a truism; but that it may come with the authority to which its importance entitles it, let our most gifted and cultivated minds account it part of their mission to endeavour to impress it upon the mind and the conscience of the whole nation.

Need I say that the measure of our national prosperity must depend, in no small degree, upon the character of our foreign relations; and this again is a subject worthy to occupy our best endowed and most accomplished intellects. In our intercourse with foreign nations as truly as with each other, we are to recognize the great law of practical Christianity,—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;” and just in proportion as any nation departs from this rule, it subjects itself to the peril and the odium of setting at naught the Divine authority; and sooner or later its day of retribution will come. The fact cannot be dissembled that, during our late period of trial, the nations to which we were most nearly allied, not only withheld from us their sympathy, but, in some instances, made positive demonstrations towards us, that seemed like a joyous anticipation of the funeral of our Republic; though we are to bear in mind that these expressions of coldness and hostility were

rather from the Government than from the people, and that a large portion of the inhabitants both of England and of France have been hearty well-wishers to the success of our cause. But Providence has disappointed the hopes of our enemies, on the other side of the water as well as on this; and the time has at length come when our national banner, with "VICTORY" inscribed upon it, is floating in the face of the whole world. And now what course are we to pursue in respect to those who did all but send up shouts of triumph, in the prospect of our being a divided Nation? Is it best to taunt them with their shortsightedness or their unfriendliness, and to assume towards them a stern and defiant attitude, as if in retribution for what we have received at their hands in our hour of darkness? Our national dignity is indeed to be maintained; but God forbid that dignity should ever degenerate into mean revenge. Let us indeed profit by the lessons which this sad experience has taught us, but let nothing tempt us to any thing that is not generous and conciliatory. Let those who preside over our periodical press, especially the editors of our most widely circulated newspapers, remember that their daily deliverances are for the British as well as the

American eye ; and that it is for them, more perhaps than for any other class, to decide whether the relations between the two countries shall be cordial and fraternal, or shall only come up to the point of a frigid decency, and, it may be, ultimately sink to the point of positive disruption. No nation is ever the loser for showing itself magnanimous, especially after having made full proof of its strength.

Yet another thought I will venture to suggest here, as worthy to be pondered by those who have access to the springs of our national weal,—namely, that the work of reconstructing, reorganizing, to meet the newly created exigencies, should be proceeded with in great thoughtfulness and deliberation. The whole world knows that the American character is distinguished for a *go-ahead* spirit, that makes obstacles seem like playthings; and this occasionally degenerates into a *headlong* spirit, that plunges at a venture, and sometimes lands in the mire. Now the point which we have reached in our national affairs demands the most calm and mature reflection on the part of those who are entrusted with the direction of them ; and, admitting that they are fully impressed with this fact, it will require an iron strength of pur-

pose to resist the clamour for an impetuous haste. I will not say that the Nation is in any thing like a *chaotic* state ; for it remains, in all its essential elements of strength and grandeur, unimpaired ; but the shock to which it has been subjected has produced material derangement, and calls for legislation on points of great delicacy and difficulty,—points which are vital to its prosperity in all coming generations. Let our cultivated minds, then,—no matter what may be their profession or occupation,—pledge themselves to an effort to prevent all indecent and dangerous haste in the decision of the great pending questions of national policy. Let the mind of the whole country discipline itself to a calm and waiting habit ; and then we may confidently expect that, at no distant period, we shall see light shining out of all the darkness in which the Rebellion has left us.

It is not improbable that, as you have followed me in this train of thought, it may have occurred to some of you to ask,—“ But what can *I* do to effect so vast an object as is here contemplated,—the elevation of the character and the destinies of the country ? ” I answer, all influence is primarily individual influence ; and the influence of a Nation is nothing more than the combined influ-

ence of all who compose it. You, as an individual, especially as blest with the means of liberal culture, can do much for your country in various ways—you can make yourself felt, as an instrument of blessing, intellectually, morally, socially, civilly—you can labour in your individual capacity, and in conjunction with other capable and well-disposed minds; and, though you cannot witness the result, as you pass along, you may be as certain that a glorious result is being wrought out as that God's ordinance is unchangeable. It is a privilege to labour for the benefit of one's country at any time, or under any circumstances; but never is the privilege greater than when our efforts are directed to secure a harvest of blessing after a seed time of tears and blood.

If, from all those who have passed away, I should select one to commend to your admiration for having proved himself a model of patriotic devotion during the recent conflict, I should pronounce the name of EDWARD EVERETT; and here, at least, I am sure the selection would require no apology—for he was the man chosen out of all the living, to consecrate, in words of beauty and power, that vast resting place of the brave, that must always make Gettysburg one of the world's

great attractions. You all know that, in every station he has occupied, he has shown himself a man of mark. Those who had the charge of his education, as well as his associates in study, recognized in his versatile powers, and intense application, and varied acquirements, the germ of his future eminence. The world heard of him first as the minister of one of the oldest Churches in Boston,—the successor of the illustrious Buckminster; but his career as a clergyman, though splendid, was brief—he left the pulpit with a view to devote himself to the quiet pursuits of academic life. Next, we hear of him as gathering laurels at one of the most celebrated German Universities; and then as travelling in different countries, associating with the most eminent men of the age, and visiting various places of classic renown. On his return home, he entered upon the duties of the Greek Professorship in Harvard College; and here he shone out at once as a star of the first magnitude; and the traditions of his extraordinary attainments in ancient learning still remain fresh in that venerable institution. In 1824, when that veteran General of our Revolution, LAFAYETTE, was here, Everett, in an Address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard, poured out a tor-

rent of eloquence in honour of the old patriot, that, of itself, would have given him rank among the most gifted orators of the age. But the time had now come for his introduction to a wider and more stirring scene of action. He was chosen a representative to Congress by the district in which he lived; and in this capacity he served with great ability and fidelity; though it must be acknowledged that Congress was not the best theatre for the exercise of some of his finest powers. After ten years of Congressional service, he was recalled by his own State, to become its Chief Magistrate; and his administration, which was unusually dignified and popular, continued through a period of five years. In 1840 he was appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James;—a position rendered the more delicate from the fact that the relations between the two countries were, at that time, far from being harmonious; but, through his great diplomatic skill, in connection with the urbanity and dignity that characterized all his movements, the tendencies to international discord were effectually checked. On withdrawing from this post of honour in 1845, he was appointed to the Presidency of the College with which his name had already become so honourably associated;

but though he brought to the office much of interest and of energy, he soon grew weary of its details, and his failing health, at the end of three years, induced him to withdraw. He returned to civil life in 1852, discharging, for several months, to great acceptance, the onerous duties of Secretary of State in the National Government; and the next year he represented his native State, with signal ability, in the United States Senate. In 1854, yielding to bodily infirmity, he resigned his office as Senator, and, shortly after, enlisted in the truly patriotic project of purchasing, by private contribution, the former residence of the Father of his Country, to be preserved as an enduring national memorial. His success in this grand enterprise was as ample as his efforts were splendid and persevering; and there is scarcely a city in the land in which are not to be found those who have cherished memories of Everett's Oration on Washington. In this noble work he was engaged when the clouds in the Southern sky began to send forth a sound of portentous import, and it became but too manifest that a mighty rushing tempest was at hand. Mr. Everett had a host of friends scattered all over the South—and more than that,—on some great questions of national

policy in which they were deeply interested, he was well known to be in sympathy with them. But when he saw the threatening evils culminating into a fearful war, and the decree went forth that the Nation was no more one but twain, then it was that his lofty, patriotic spirit took fire, and he became, both by his lips and by his pen, a leader in the great work of preserving our national fabric. The position, which he felt called to assume, disappointed and vexed his Southern friends ; and I had it from his own lips that pleading, flattering, even threatening, letters were addressed to him, with a view to turn his influence in an opposite direction. But, notwithstanding his naturally quiet and gentle habit, he stood firm as a rock ; and, during the rest of his life, he scarcely knew any other occupation than that of labouring for the discomfiture of Treason and the deliverance of his country. His noble effort at the consecration of your Cemetery was only one of a host of efforts by which he helped to warm and strengthen the Nation's heart. His last great work—I refer to all that he did in connection with the war—was a fitting crown of his eminently useful and honoured life ; and through all coming generations he will be gratefully and reverently

spoken of as one of his country's chief benefactors.

I have said more of this illustrious man, perhaps, than I could have justified to my sense of propriety, had it not been that his patriotic eloquence is so identified with the history of this place that his name must always remain here as a household word; though I will not dissemble the fact that an intimate acquaintance with him, reaching back to our very early years, had predisposed me to avail myself of an occasion so honourable as this to bear a grateful testimony in honour of his memory. And I am willing to hope that the glance which I have taken at his vast acquirements, his manly virtues, his life of ceaseless and diversified occupation, and, above all, his devotion to his country in the time of her greatest need, may not be lost upon you; that it may be the means of quickening your aspirations, and giving a fresh impulse to your efforts, to accommodate yourselves to the great national crisis which you are called to meet.

I have endeavored, Young Gentlemen, as well as I could, to illustrate your obligations, in common with those of all our educated men, to be faithful to the interests of our country at this

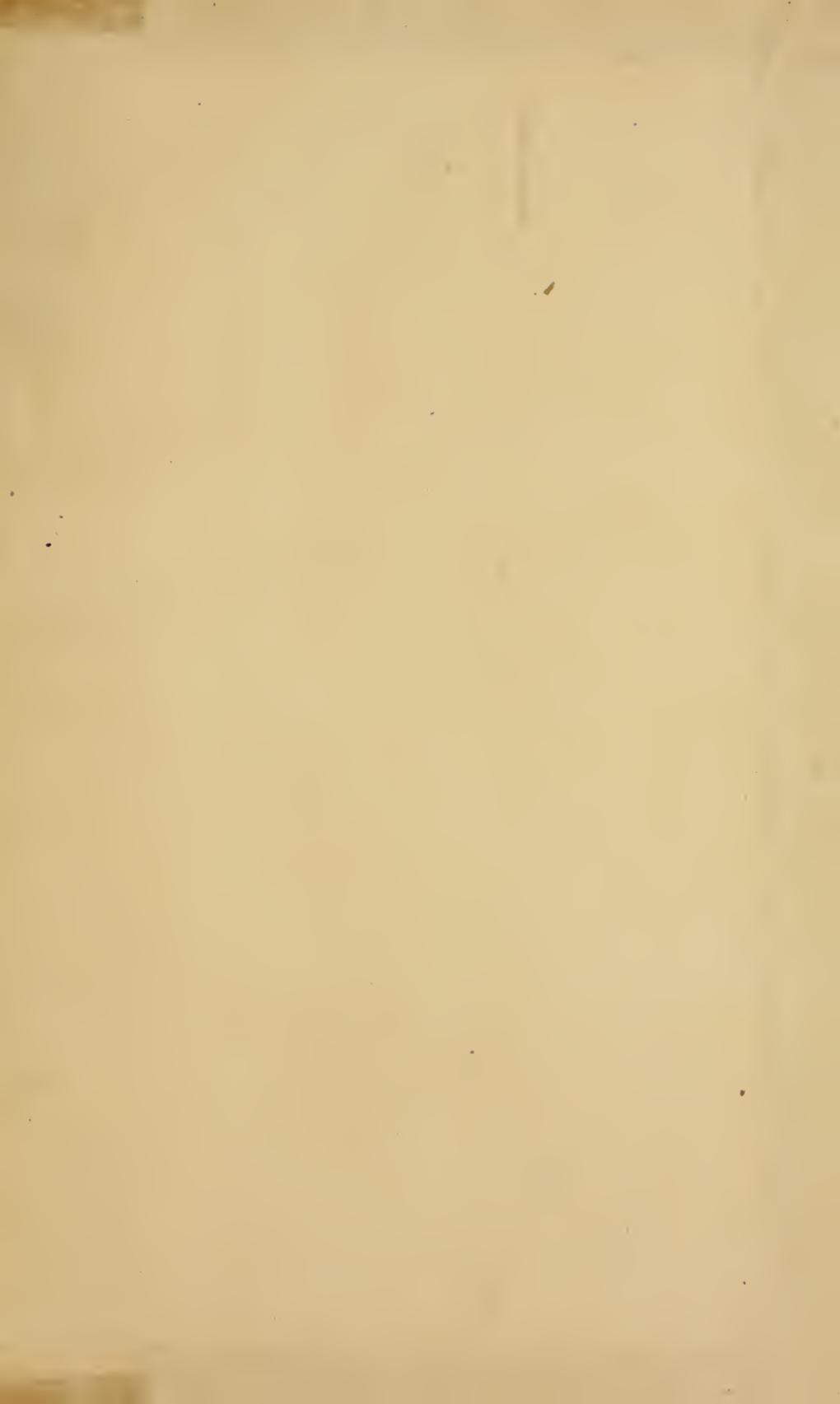
promising, yet perilous, juncture; to let all the influence you can command be rendered subservient to the greater stability and efficiency of our free institutions. But when I think where I stand, I am almost oppressed with the idea that I have been performing a work of supererogation; for you are all the time in contact with objects and associations, mightier than any human voice to stir the patriotic spirit to its lowest depths. The buildings you occupy, the streets you traverse, the very breeze that fans you,—each and all point back to the terrible week, when the very Eagle, representing our liberties, seemed to have come down, covered with dust and blood. Above all, that vast receptacle of the dead,—the monument of stupendous crime, the spot where Loyalty and Treason held each other in iron grasp, until the monster's eyes became bloody, and his heart grew faint, and he ran off in a paroxysm of consternation, if not of despair,—that enclosure of the dust of the brave, I say, is trumpet-tongued in its appeals for a vigorous support of the cause that has already cost so much. I know you cannot live on such a spot as this, and amidst such influences as must always prevail here, without being ready, at a moment's warning, to meet any demand

that your country may make of you. Let this noble institution, that has grown up here in the very heart of natural loveliness and beauty, be thrice honoured, in view of the triumph of the right that was gained by her side. Let strangers that walk about her, as they think mournfully of the past, breathe forth the prayer that she may always be the stronger and the better for her baptism in blood.









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 927 044 0